



EEE Committee Meeting Minutes February 11, 2014

A meeting of the EEE Committee was held on Tuesday, February beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the Mellon Board Room. Members present included: Angela Smith, Dr. Laura Taylor, Dr. Judy Wiegand, Judy Reynolds, Azark Cobb, Lee Ann Kelly, Angela Hassell, Minnie Pearson, Alejandra Aguero

Absent: Mabinty Tarawallie, Karl Radnitzer, Cathy Mannen, Sujata dey Koontz, and Jamar Brown.

Also present: Bill Taylor, Sara Sanders and Orlando Thomas.

Welcome: Ms. Smith welcomed the committee, noting that there were several items on the agenda for today's discussion. She asked those already gathered to begin reviewing the meeting minutes, adding that some members have other commitments and indicated they would be not able to attend the today's meeting.

Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Azark Cobb, seconded by Lee Ann Kelly to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2014 meeting. All yeas motion carried on a voice vote.

Ms. Smith quoted the purpose of the committee, reading from articles written in 2005 and 2011. She said the numbers speak for themselves, referencing data and how Black and Latino fourth graders have been more than 26 points apart and by the time they are in 8th grade that gap increased. She shared that Dr. Alfred Tatum is going to come and present to our staff about understanding the impact of culture in an adolescent's life and how that is an essential concern of adolescents.

Ms. Smith said the texts used for AA males are disabling. She said staff has been talking about these as we examine our curriculum. She reminded that this Committee is here for a very specific reason. The purpose is also to create a transparent window for sharing with the community. Because of that, she said the Committee will see periods of sharing and periods of planning. She noted the importance of staying true to reporting out as well as making changes.

ACTIONS Report: Ms. Smith introduced Orlando Thomas, the Director of Achievement and Pupil Services, who was present to report out on the Alternative Center for Targeted Instruction and Ongoing Support (ACTIONS) program. Mr. Thomas served on the DEAC for 13 years and he said while that committee has done a great time on highlighting issues; it has not spent a lot of time of moving into action and problem-solving. In an effort to change outcomes for students the ACTIONS program was implemented. In reviewing the suspension data the following trends were observed:

- Highest number of suspensions were given to African American and low SES students
- Most occurrences were in the transition grades 5th and 9th

- Demographics have not changed – still 75% of the suspensions are assigned to African American students

Mr. Thomas said the committee determined to add an intervention as a consequence before suspension. They looked at “layering” interventions. Mr. Thomas explained the District cannot mandate placing a student in the ACTIONS Program, but they can give it as an assignment.

Mr. Thomas reviewed some of the items from ACTIONS accessible by administrators:

- Student work
- Social skills materials
- Student Progress Reports
- Feedback from ACTIONS staff
- Suggestions for interventions at school
- Social Skills cards (over 100 different social skills that can be taught)
- Student will receive direct instruction in the area of suspension
- Cards are sent back with the student

Mr. Thomas went over the top 5 behaviors/reasons for suspension

- Confrontation with student
- Confrontation with staff
- Disobedience
- Verbal abuse to staff
- Drug related offences

Mr. Thomas reviewed the data collected on ACTIONS:

- 72% of the students chose the ACTIONS Program
- 69% had no subsequent suspension (1st semester time frame)
- 98 attended and earned daily expectations
- 2nd part of the day is devoted to school work
- Dr. Taylor said the District will start tracking the school work
- Mr. Thomas said students have been open and willing to share some reasons for their behaviors
- Targeted support is available for students who had 3 or more suspensions
- 58 or the 89 students remain in the district
- 1360 total contacts were made by staff first semester
- Added an assistant principal to the ACTION staff
- Created calendar of follow up visits to schools
- Community involvement includes 4 guest speakers talk to students and 15 individuals volunteer weekly through U of I partnership
- Community partnerships have been formed with Mentoring Program, ETC Program, Youth Assessment Center, Prairieland Mediation Center, Community Elements and Prairie Center
- Parent/Family Voice

Mr. Thomas also presented trends in suspensions noting the following findings

- High schools continue to do a fantastic job – and suspensions continue to decrease
- Highest suspension rates were seen in 5th, 7th, 8th and 9th grades
- Increase in kindergarten and first grade suspensions was noted

Lee Ann Kelly asked about trends and what the state numbers reflect? Sara Sanders asked what elementary behaviors are assigned a suspension. Mr. Thomas replied that there was a broad range of behaviors, notably inappropriate language, kicking, temper tantrums, refusal to follow directions, throwing items, biting, and scratching. He explained tiers of support that are utilized before suspension in response to questions from Alex Aguero. He said in some instances a “safety aide” has been put in place. In three chronic situations that has resolved the issue. Angela Hassell questioned if any of these students are involved in the child welfare system. Ms. Kelly asked if families provide information about preschool attendance when they are registering their child.

Mr. Taylor, South Side Principal, talked about the “kindergarten round-up” process. He said incoming students are given an assessment so we can start teaching from the “get go”. He added that there is also discussion about ECC attendance at transition meetings held in May. The Committee discussed looking at ways to see if there is a process that can identify children who might have problems. Mr. Taylor said teachers spend the first 6 weeks teaching kids strategies for how to be successful in the school. Comments were made that some students may not have access to that program if they move from another district or even within the district. Ms. Aguero spoke about integrating the children, but also integrating the parents. Mr. Taylor replied that teachers are helping the parents with information, computer labs, government resources, etc. Ms. Aguero referenced programs/support groups for women that have been successful in the India culture.

Mr. Thomas continued his ACTIONS presentation with identifying second semester goals and what they need to make it happen. He went over some other work of the program including:

- Gaining student input
- Student letters to the troops
- Repairing the relationships with student/teachers

Ms. Smith said she sat in on some meetings when ACTION staff met with campuses and noted that both students and adults are reflecting on what they can do to repair relationships. Mr. Cobb asked about parental involvement and if there was a system in place where the program contacts parents and conducts field visits in the home. Mr. Thomas said to date no home visits have been made. Mr. Thomas reported that the ACTIONS participation has been approximately 60% male and 40% female. Sara Sanders said the ACTION program has been well received with Franklin staff. Dr. Taylor recognized the Unit 4 Board of Education for their support of this program. The Committee thanked Mr. Thomas for sharing information on the program.

Revisiting Our Goals: Ms. Smith said she is paying attention to committee member comments and reads articles that are sent to her. She reminded that the Committee has been talking about the three areas/goals of focus. Ms. Smith said one of those areas was the gap for African America 3rd/4th grade

males. She said last year this area was not addressed, but some elementary campuses' benchmark data showed success in this area; namely South Side and Barkstall.

Ms. Smith introduced South Side Principal Bill Taylor to talk about some things happening at his campus that may be affecting this area. Mr. Taylor said there was no "magic bullet" but we do have some strategies that we feel are effective. Mr. Taylor said South Side understands there is a gap and are looking at students who traditionally do not do well in the area of literacy, specifically African American and SpEd students. Mr. Taylor said you get results where you put your energy and attention. In the fall we administer AIMSweb and it showed the gaps and it is what we used to identify and target students at all grade levels. Interventionists work with groups of student who are struggling in K-2 so you can get reading by 3rd grade. Mr. Taylor said third grade is a crisis point. He talked about a strategy to pull 3-5 kids and work in small group settings. Mr. Taylor shared the extra assistance through Rtl dollars and Title I. Another resource is a computer reading program to help struggling readers. Lexia provides teachers with really rich reports. Mr. Taylor said during collaboration time we talk about data and, more importantly, we talk about specific kids. He said the Assistant Principal has these same conversations with SpEd teachers and students. What it boils down to in the end is relationships. In addition to academic support we have other supports such as "wrap around" teams. Bill said along the way they progress monitor to see if interventions are working. He added that last summer they sent books home with targeted students. If the parents signs off that the child read the books, then the child is eligible to receive a prize or incentive. Ms. Pearson talked about the importance of a summer program. Ms. Smith added that summer school is now being defined by the buildings. Ms. Aguero asked about the process for enrichment selection and Mr. Taylor explained it is an assessment based selection.

Mr. Cobb asked about African American enrollment percentage at South Side. He asked about the special skills of an interventionist and the ethnicity of that individual. Mr. Taylor replied that an interventionist is trained in reading recovery and other targeted interventions and that individual at South Side is white. The Committee discussed reasons for pull out intervention, catching kids before they reach the 3rd/4th grade level and what happens creatively to help students who are struggling.

The following suggestions were discussed:

- Infomercial and Builders club
- Creating a culture of reading where they didn't have the resources.

Ms. Smith said there is a Builders Club at each middle school and their goal is to work with the trades. The idea was discussed to have this group build bookshelves for homeless shelters. Ms. Pearson suggested rapid rehousing or underserved day care centers as locations for the bookshelves. Ms. Kelly mentioned Frances Nelson and the CUPHD. Ms. Pearson also talked about having a scholastic mailing to children over the summer such as Weekly Reader or Highlights. Ms. Sanders referred to the reading buddies program. Ms. Pearson suggested a "mentor" program where possibly a fifth grade student is paired with a struggling first grader.

Another idea was to provide Infomercials – tips for parents who are to teach reading at home provided by teachers that are experts and can give tips. Ms. Kelly suggested the Born Learning site as a possible option. Ms. Smith will obtain a couple of the reading suggestions to review.

Discussion was held about the Career Fair and Ms. Smith said she will talk with Marc Changnon to see if it is a replication or if it is another option. The Dream Big campaign can take place in the buildings. Goal 3 includes handpicking teachers for the 3rd/4th grade level. In addition, discussion was held about student ownership and learning. Sara Sanders shared information about data monitoring at Franklin that became a friendly competition between grade levels. She said they saw a lot of progress and she is excited to start even earlier next year to see if we can get improved fall data.

Future meeting Dates:

- Monday March 17
- April 10th

Future Meeting Topics:

- Feedback on initiatives
- Report out data from a campus

Meeting adjourned: 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Gayle Griffin-Jordan
Recording Secretary